

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
April 5, 2010

Subcommittee Members: Council Member Sheryl Cole (Chair)
Council Member Laura Morrison
Council Member Chris Riley

1. Citizen Communication (3 minutes to speak).

No citizens spoke under citizen communication.

2. Approval of Minutes from the March 1, 2010 regular subcommittee meeting.

Minutes approved by a vote of 3-0.

3. Staff Presentation on proposed process for Airport Blvd. Corridor
Redevelopment Initiative.

Jim Robertson, Planning and Development Review Department, stated that the boundaries of the proposed project are Airport Blvd., from IH-35 to Lamar, a total of 2.5 miles. He also explained the concept and tools of form based codes. Staff recommends that the proposed project be consultant-led and managed by the Urban Design Division of Planning and Development Review Department. The project would include input from stakeholders and would assist in identifying needed capital improvements for the area. He added that this project could serve as a pilot project for similar projects throughout the city.

He explained the proposed process for the project, which would begin with the community vision. Steps in the project would include a charrette and the appointment of an advisory group whose membership would be appointed by Council. It would also include the development of a form based code master plan which includes all elements of a form based code, but is not yet in ordinance form. The final process would include the development of a form based code ordinance that is integrated into the Land Development code. The timeframe for the project would be 18 months to two years with a cost ranging from \$400,000 to \$700,000.

Council Member Riley questioned whether funding had been identified for the project or whether it would be possible to utilize funding from federal stimulus monies or grant opportunities. .

Ed VanEeno, Budget Officer, responded that funding would be considered during the fiscal year 2010-2011 budget process. Staff is exploring grant or TIF opportunities to fund improvements, but those monies would not be included in the funding for the consultant to get this project moving forward.

Council Member Code questioned whether infrastructure improvements could be included in a transportation bond package. Rob Spillar, Transportation Director, responded that the problem with including a project that's still in the design phase in a bond package is that it ties up bond funds for a very long time before they can actually be used. He noted bond funds are just now being used for projects that are 10 years old, and therefore the city is trying to change the paradigm by which funding is requested through voter approved bonds.

Council Member Cole questioned how this segment of Airport Blvd. was selected as a form based code project. Jim Robertson responded that this was in response to a Council resolution. Council Member Riley added that this particular corridor was selected due to neighborhood interest in seeing significant changes for this area, especially in light of the neighborhood planning efforts of the Highland and North Loop neighborhoods and a strong desire for redevelopment, pedestrian improvements and mixed use. He added that the redevelopment of the Highland Mall area and the number of small businesses that exist in the area have positioned the corridor to become similar to the South Congress area.

Council Member Cole stated that more time needs to be spent brainstorming funding options. Council Member Morrison added that there will be competing needs in the budget process and a cost of \$400,000 to \$700,000 for a consultant could be a barrier to what is wanted for this corridor. She suggested additional brainstorming on funding options in order to proceed with an adequate amount of consultant involvement, but scale back and use the skills of city staff in order to lower the cost.

Greg Guernsey, Director, Planning and Development Review Department, spoke about staff shortages and the difficulty in absorbing an additional project given current staff constraints on other projects.

Council Member Riley spoke about the potential tax base that would be created as a result of redevelopment of the corridor. He questioned whether it was possible to predict the development potential and future tax base.

Jim Robertson said that a prediction could be made based on current entitlements, but a form based code would result in a change of entitlements.

Damon Howze, Highland Neighborhood Association, said the Highland Mall Renewal committee is looking at developing the corridor with 6 story uses and are comfortable with high rises on the current Highland Mall site in exchange for sidewalks, bicycle lanes and pedestrian oriented improvements.

Council Member Cole said the committee members need to work with other council members to get a sense of priorities for the upcoming budget while considering staff constraints to do much of the work. She suggested that work not commence until they brainstorm on how to start the initiative.

4. Staff Update on Comprehensive Plan.

Matt Duggan and Greg Claxton, Planning and Development Review Department provided an update on the community forum series, progress on the vision statement, and a task force update. The Community Forum Series #1 resulted in 4,806 survey responses. The final vision statement is scheduled for council consideration in late July/August. The task force has created the new Steering and Analysis committees. The Community Forum Series #2 will be held the week of April 20-29, and 36 locations have been secured. The Series will include a community design activity and Strategic Mobility activity.

Council Member Morrison asked Task Force Chair Judge Cooper to provide comments on the task force's progress. Judge Cooper responded that the communication and engagement committees have been very busy on outreach activities. They are trying to outreach to members of the community to ensure that a wide sample of the community is engaged, and want to ensure that the task force serves as a conduit for what citizens want for this city in the next 30 years. The task force meets once a month and they were hoping that the CPTC could serve as part of a triangle between the task force and the Council so that everyone is made aware of what each member of the triangle is doing.

Judge Cooper discussed the importance of communication between the Task Force, CPTC and Planning Commission. She stated that the Task Force and subcommittees will be providing minutes of their meetings, and she hoped that that a regular format would be created to allow Task Force members to provide monthly updates to CPTC. She asked that when a Task Force member is invited to appear before the CPTC, the invite be extended through the Chair. She said some members feel that other members do not speak on their behalf, and therefore it is important that all members be given the same opportunity to be heard. She added that she wants to be sure that members of the steering committee are available to CPTC, and they also want to ensure that CPTC is adequately informed of their activities.

Dave Sullivan, representing the Planning Commission, spoke about Planning Commission's involvement. He said that currently the Planning Commission is mostly listening and getting monthly briefings from staff. He said the Planning Commission will become more active once discussion on the elements begins. Overall, they're there to listen and provide support, but will become more involved once they start discussing the elements.

Council Member Cole thanked Judge Cooper for her leadership and dedication to serving on the Task Force. She said she was interested in the process of hearing from the task force and does not want to isolate any Task Force member from speaking to CPTC. She added that they do not want any members making statements unless they are speaking on behalf of the entire task force. She suggested that the CPTC agenda have a standing monthly agenda item, and Judge Cooper provided assurance that a member of the task force would be available to provide updates.

Council Member Morrison said it was important that the CPTC receives feedback from the full task force, and she felt it was important to have Planning Commission involvement as well.

No action taken.

5. Staff Presentation on Coordination of Strategic Mobility Plan and Comprehensive Plan Initiatives.

Council Member Cole asked staff to provide individual briefings for herself and Council Member Morrison.

6. Staff Update and possible action on Morrow Street Traffic Analysis

Molly Scarbrough, Planning and Development Review, stated that during the TOD Station Area Planning process, area residents requested that the raised island that prohibits westbound and left-turn traffic movements on Morrow be removed. The Council subsequently directed staff to conduct a traffic analysis to analyze potential impacts of removing the island. She presented conclusions of the analysis and requested feedback from the committee on next steps. Options for next steps are to continue to pursue long-term improvements that will provide better east-west access, and to encourage surrounding neighborhoods to work together to find a solution. Council options include the following: leaving the barrier in place, removing the barrier, removing the barrier as a pilot project, adjusting signal timing, conducting traffic counts and re-evaluation in the future.

Eddie Gary, representing Crestview Neighborhood, said they oppose the barrier and any improvements that would increase traffic on Morrow. They have worked with City, State, and other neighborhoods to get this traffic problem under control. He noted that fatalities have occurred at the intersection, thus it has become more of a safety issue than convenience issue. He spoke about traffic volumes on Morrow, and are waiting for implementation of traffic calming measures. He expressed concern that the traffic analysis conducted by staff did not take into account traffic increases as a result of the Crestview Station or Midtown Commons, which will add 1,000 trips on Morrow.

Damon Howze, Highland Neighborhood, suggested that the barrier be removed temporarily in order to measure its impact. He said the intersection of Lamar and Morrow is very dangerous and opening Morrow would reduce cut-through traffic on adjacent streets.

Steven Dobie, Crestview Neighborhood, spoke about the traffic on Watson Street. He said that traffic issues on 183/Lamar/Anderson impact the traffic on Watson Street. He also expressed concern about the traffic counts because they did not include the Crestview Station and or the new Wal-Mart. Without improvements to Anderson Lane and Burnet Road, traffic trying to access the new Wal-Mart will cut-through the neighborhood. He said safety concerns should supersede convenience.

Due to lack of time, Council Member Cole requested that this item be continued to the May 3rd meeting.